

Page 1, above the paragraph beginning at line 11, insert the following subheading:

B2 2. Discussion of Prior Art.

Page 6, above the paragraph beginning at line 8, insert the following heading:

B3 --SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--

Page 7, above the paragraph beginning at line 13, insert the following heading:

B4 --DETAILED DISCUSSION OF EMBODIMENTS--

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel without prejudice claims 1, 2 and 6, amend claims 3-5, 7-10 and 12-16, and add newly written claim 17 as follows.

Please substitute the following amended claim(s) for corresponding claim(s) previously presented. A copy of the amended claim(s) showing current revisions is attached.

B5 3 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, in which performing step c1 is subordinate to a time delay elapsing since the preceding operation of putting the flag into the non-ratified state.

4 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, in which performing step c1 is subordinate to the machine performing the current transaction belonging to a group to which the machine that performed the preceding transaction also belongs.

35 5 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, in which, when the flag is in the non-ratified state, delivery without debit is inhibited if the machine detects that delivery took place during the preceding use of the object.

36 7 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, in which at least a portion of the information modifying the state of the object, in particular commands enabling the flag to be put into the ratified state, is previously processed by cryptographic means implemented both in the object and in the machine.

8 (*Twice Amended*) The method according to claim 17, in which at least a portion of the information relating to the state of the object, in particular the state of the flag and confirmation that the debit has taken into account, is previously processed by cryptographic means implemented both in the object and in the machine.

9 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, in which the goods or service is delivered in deferred manner after a given time delay.

37 10 (*Amended*) The method of claim 9, in which delivery takes place prior to the expiry of the time delay in the event of receiving confirmation that the object has been successful in putting the flag into the ratified state.

B8 12 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, in which the information
interchanged between the machine and the object is enciphered in such a manner as to
avoid revealing the moment at which the machine instructs the object to put the flag into
the ratified state, or the moment at which the object performs that instruction.

13 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, including, in the machine, counting
the number of occasions on which it reads a flag in the non-ratified state.

14 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, including the object counting the
number of occasions on which it stores the flag in the non-ratified state between two
transactions.

15 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 13, in which means are provided to
indicate that a given threshold has been exceeded by the count in the object, in particular
means for inhibiting subsequent delivery of goods or service.

16 (*Twice Amended*) The method of claim 17, in which the object memory
includes information about the kind of goods or service to be delivered, which
information is updated before any delivery of said goods or service.

B9 -- 17. (*New*) A method of interchanging data between the non-volatile memory of
a portable object and an automatic machine with which the portable object is temporarily

coupled to enable goods or service to be delivered, the portable object storing in said non-volatile memory value information that can be debited by the machine in consideration for delivering the goods or service, and a ratification flag having two states, a ratified state and a non-ratified state, wherein the method comprises the successive following steps:

B9 a) the machine reads the state of the flag and jumps to step e) if said flag is in the non-ratified state;

b) the machine issues to the portable object a command for debiting said value information by an amount corresponding to the goods or service to be delivered;

c) the portable object:

c1) records the debit by updating the value information, and

c2) puts the flag into the non-ratified state,

said sub-steps of recording the debit and putting the flag into the non-ratified state being performed in indivisible manner;

d) the portable object issues to the machine an acknowledgement signal indicating that the debit has been recorded;

e) the machine delivers the goods or service;

f) the machine issues to the portable object a command for setting the flag to the ratified state; and

g) the portable object puts the flag into the ratified state.--